

Standard Procedures for Aquatic Animal Health Inspections

Developed and Edited by:

**United States Fish and Wildlife Service
And
American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section**

Appendix 1

The Handbook and Oversight Committee

A1.1 Format of The Handbook

A. Title

1. The document itself shall be titled “Standard Procedures for Aquatic Animal Health Inspections”

B. Chapters – There shall be 6 chapters plus any necessary appendices

1. Chapter 1 – Introduction - This chapter will contain introductory information and explanation about this handbook
2. Chapter 2 – Sampling - This chapter will contain information about sampling animals for a health inspection
3. Chapter 3 – Bacteriology - This chapter will contain information on sampling, testing and corroborating samples for bacterial pathogen inspection
4. Chapter 4 – Virology - This chapter will contain information on sampling, testing and corroborating samples for viral pathogen inspection
5. Chapter 5 - Parasitology - This chapter will contain information on sampling, testing and corroborating samples for parasitic pathogen inspection
6. Chapter 6 – Polymerase Chain Reaction – General Protocols – This chapter shall contain general protocols and quality assurance and quality control information for utilizing polymerase chain reaction methodologies.
7. Appendices
 - a. Appendix 1 – The Handbook - This Appendix will contain the format information for the handbook and procedural information for making changes to this handbook.
 - b. Appendix 2 - Handbook Committee and Sub-Committee Members
 - i This appendix will keep a record of those individuals serving on any committee or sub-committee, their terms of appointment and their position on the committee.
 - ii The construction of this appendix shall be as follows:
 - 1 Each Subchapter of this Appendix will represent one year.
 - 2 Each committee member will be listed as a section within the sub-chapter of the Appendix.
 - 3 Their position on the committee will then be listed as an item under their section

- 4 Subcommittee members will be listed as items under the committee member that chairs the subcommittee on which they serve
 - 5 Entries will include the name, title, and affiliation of the individual
- c. Appendix 3 – Position Statements - This appendix will keep a record of all discussions by those individuals serving on any committee or sub-committee, their terms of appointment and their position on the committee. The construction of this appendix will be as follows:
- i Each sub chapter of this appendix will represent one chapter in the handbook
 - 1 The Introduction will be Appendix 3.1
 - 2 Sampling will be Appendix 3.2
 - 3 Bacteriology will be Appendix 3.3
 - 4 Virology will be Appendix 3.4
 - 5 Parasitology will be Appendix 3.5
 - 6 Polymerase Chain Reaction – General Protocols will be Appendix 3.6
 - 7 Appendix 1 changes will be documented in Appendix 3.7
 - ii Each submission will be a section within the appropriate sub-chapter of the Appendix.
 - iii Each position statement and the resultant changes will then be listed as items under their section

C. Layout – The layout of the document will be as follows:

The format will be in Outline form

- a. The alphanumeric system will be: 1.2, **A**, 1, a, i, *1*, *a*, *i*
- b. Appendices will be also be in outline format with an “A” being placed before the appendix number.
 - i Appendix three of the entire document would be titled and referenced as (A3)
 - ii Appendix two of Chapter 3 would be titled and referenced as (3.A2)

Chapter Structure

- c. Each chapter will have its own references
- d. Each Chapter will have its own Appendices
- e. Chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Sampling), 6 (Polymerase Chain Reaction – General Protocols) and the Appendices are to serve as references for the other chapters

References to other sections within the handbook will be in the same alphanumeric form as the outline.

- f. Example: Reference (1.2.C.3.a) will be found in chapter 1, sub chapter 2, section C, number 3, item a.

D. Stringency

1. The appropriateness of methodologies shall be determined based on several factors to make these protocols realistic to accomplish.
 - a. The sensitivity of the assay
 - b. The specificity of the assay
 - c. The cost of the assay.
 - d. Availability of reagents
 - e. Availability of technology
 - f. Manpower requirements.
2. All methods and protocols provided in this handbook shall be referenced and scientifically defensible.
3. The incorporation of additional pathogens into this handbook shall be contingent on the availability of appropriate screening and COROBORATIVE tests, and because such tests are commonly required by fish health regulators.

E. Maintenance of the Handbook

1. Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee
 - a. Annual review as requested by open invitation (see process below)
 - g. Physical possession of the electronic editable version of the Handbook in Microsoft Word 2000 Format
 - i. This shall be held by four individuals

- 1* Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee Co-chair, United States Fish and Wildlife Service Representative
 - 2* Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee Co-chair, American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section Representative
 - 3* United States Fish and Wildlife Service National fish health coordinator or their duly appointed representative.
 - 4* Chairman of the American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section or their duly appointed representative.
- h. Maintain an appendix of position statements to keep track of discussions so as not to revisit issues that have been previously decided when no new information has come available.
- i Changes to the Handbook shall be recorded as well, so the specifics of any given change can be examined in the future.
 - ii Dissenting opinions shall be included in the position statements as well

F. Distribution of the Handbook

Electronic Distribution (Non-editable) – PDF Format

- a. CD Rom distribution of current version
- b. Web Site
 - i Initial Distribution
 - ii Yearly updates

Printed Handbooks of current version.

A1.2 Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee

A. Committee Construction

The handbook revision and oversight committee shall consist of 8 people

- a Three (3) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - b Three (3) from the American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section.
 - c United States Fish and Wildlife Service National fish health coordinator or their duly appointed representative. (Ex-officio)
 - d Chairman of the American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section or their duly appointed representative. (Ex-officio)
2. The committee will be co-chaired by one individual from each organization.
 3. The terms of these committee members shall be 3 consecutive years.
 - a Terms shall begin 2 months prior to the individuals first annual meeting
 - b Terms shall conclude 10 months after the individuals third consecutive annual meeting.
 - c An individual may not serve on the committee again once their 3 year term has expired, unless a period of 2 years has elapsed.

Each committee member will rotate through the committee as follows.

- d Year one – In-coming member
- e Year two – Co-chair
- f Year three – Outgoing member
- g This rotation will allow for continuity from year to year.

New committee members shall be invited to join the committee by the new committee co-chairs sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting.

B. Committee Function

The Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee shall meet in person at least once a year.

- a The meeting shall be held in September of each year.
- b All additional or subsequent meetings of this committee or its sub-committees do not need to be held in person.

- c At least 2/3 of any committee or sub-committee must be present to make official decisions.
- 2. The Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee shall address all requests for revision of the Handbook.
- 3. The Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee shall keep the Handbook current and shall update all distributables (CD-ROM, web page, and print version) at least once a year, and no later than 60 days prior to the next in person committee meeting.
- 4. The Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee shall maintain possession of the editable copies of the Handbook
- 5. The Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee shall oversee the distribution of the Handbook

A1.3 Process for Amending the Handbook (Fig. 1)

- A. At least sixty (60) days prior to their annual meeting, the Revision and Oversight committee shall, through the new committee co-chairs, send out a notice to all U.S.F.W.S. project leaders and shall publish a notice in the AFS-FHS newsletter with the date of the annual review of the inspection handbook. Additionally comments and concerns should be solicited at this time for discussion at the meeting. Individuals should be encouraged to include any new information that may need to be considered when evaluating their comments and concerns.

- B. Written requests for changes in the document or for discussion of concerns shall be submitted no later than thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the revision and oversight committee. The requests and comments shall be submitted to the committee co-chairs who will then distribute them to the other committee members for their consideration prior to the meeting.

- C. Committee members shall search the appendix for related issues or position statements that have addressed these concerns or similar concerns. This shall be done to aid in determining the need to address a particular query due to changes in available information.

- D. At the annual meeting the committee will hold discussions on each query to determine whether or not the issue merits further review.
 - 1. If the committee calls for no further review, the committee shall write a position statement to be incorporated with the query and added to Appendix 3. Additionally the person submitting the query shall also receive a copy of the position statement.

 - 2. Should the committee decide the matter warrants further discussion a sub-committee shall be formed.
 - a. Sub-committees shall be formed with regard to the chapter under review (ie. Bacteriology, Virology, and Parasitology), this will ensure consistency within any chapter. Sub-committees formed to deal with issues within Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 6 or Appendix 1 should focus on how changes will affect all sections of the handbook as these relate to all the other chapters.

 - b. A member of the Revision and Oversight Committee shall chair each sub-committee.

 - c. Each sub-committee will address all the queries regarding their chapter moved forward by the Revision and Oversight Committee

 - d. The sub-committees shall be composed of 6-12 members.
 - i. Members are drawn from both the USFWS and the AFS-FHS.

- ii. Equal representation is not required on sub-committees; however there must be at least two representatives of each organization on each sub-committee.
 - iii. The sub-committee chair will invite individuals to participate on the sub-committee.
 - iv. The invitees shall be experts or have extensive experience in the discipline being discussed.
 - v. The invitees shall represent a diverse area of the country and have a broad species interest, to ensure equal consideration of all potential culture situations.
- e. The sub-committee chair shall assemble the sub-committee, provide them with the queries to be addressed and any other material needed and schedule a meeting within 30 days of the annual meeting.

E. The sub-committees shall determine again if the query needs to be addressed.

If it is determined by the sub-committee that the issue does not warrant action:

- a. The sub-committee shall write a position statement explaining why this decision was made and it will be submitted to the Revision and Oversight Committee for inclusion in Appendix 3.
- b. The submitter of the query will also be provided a copy of the position from the sub-committee.

If the sub-committee finds the query needs to be addressed they shall:

- a. Determine the most appropriate changes to be made to the document
- b. Submit line-by-line recommendations in a position statement, which is delivered to the revision and oversight committee within ninety (90) days of the sub-committees first meeting.

F. At this time the Revision and Oversight Committee shall have thirty (30) days to review these changes and determine if they fit with the other parts of the handbook and are in-line with the purpose and intent of the handbook.

If the committee accepts them:

- a. The revision and oversight committee co-chairs make the changes to the handbook.
- b. The changes as well as the sub-committee position statement are added to Appendix 3.

- c The individual submitting the query shall receive a copy of the position statement and notice of the subsequent changes to the handbook.
 - 2. If the revision and oversight committee rejects the suggested changes. They shall supply a written position statement for these actions to the subcommittee chair, who in turn shall provide it to the sub-committee members.
- G. The sub-committee shall have an additional sixty (60) days to:
- 1. Resubmit their changes, by submitting a new position statement to the Revision and Oversight Committee through the sub-committee chair.
 - 2. Drop the changes, and issue a new position statement for inclusion in Chapter 3.
- H. The revision and oversight committee shall have thirty (30) days to re-review these changes. If the new submittal is accepted by the Revision and Oversight Committee they shall:
- a Write a position statement
 - b Make the changes to the handbook
 - c Add the changes well as all position statements to Appendix 3.
 - d Supply the query submitter a copy of both the position statement and the subsequent changes to the handbook.
- If the submission is once again rejected the revision and oversight committee shall:
- e Provide a position statement, which shall be included in Appendix 3 and a copy provided to the individual that made the request.
 - f The request will then be considered closed and will only be reconsidered if re-submitted in the future.
- I. Position statements may be written by any member of the sub-committee or Revision and Oversight Committee and signed off on by all committee members before being added to Appendix 3. It is essential that all opinions, including those dissenting from the decision, be included in the position statement.

Figure 1: Flow Chart of procedures to handle requests to change the handbook

